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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3285
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 5533
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 3253
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 3118
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 3776
RHMCSUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHRC/USDA WASHDC

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SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, EB
ANKARA FOR AGRICULTURE COUNSELOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ETRD](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMEN WINES WON INTERNATIONAL PRIZES

¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for Internet distribution.

¶2. (U) SUMMARY: Turkmenistan's state-owned wine industry dates back to the 1920s. It produces predominantly a sweet red wine, most of which is exported to Russia. The government's news agency reported recently that Turkmenistan's winemakers gained prestigious prizes at the recent International Wine Competition in Yalta. According to the report, these prizes supplemented the previous one hundred international prizes gained by Turkmenistan's winemakers over the past sixteen years. The prize-winning wines are not available for purchase on the local market. END SUMMARY.

¶3. (U) On August 5, the Turkmen Government news agency reported that Turkmenistan's winemakers gained two grand prizes and seven gold medals at the recent International Wine Competition in Yalta. The event was sponsored by the Paris-based International Organization of Vine and Wine (an intergovernmental organization that deals with technical and scientific aspects of viticulture and winemaking) and organized by the Ukrainian National Institute of Vine and Wine and the Union of CIS viticulturists and winemakers. It gathered 65 wineries and companies from 17 countries. Turkmen cognac, "The Great Revival" of the Ashgabat wine factory and white vintage dessert wine, "Yasman Salyk" of Geoktepe wine factory won the competition's grand prizes. Dessert wines of Ashgabat, Geoktepe, Abadan and Iolotan wine factories gained gold medals. The news report claimed that Turkmen winemakers had won over one hundred international prizes over the past sixteen years.

¶4. (U) Turkmenistan's Food Industry Association supervises the wine industry by issuing licenses for wine factories and controlling the quality of their products. Turkmenistan produces Marsala and Madeira wines. There

are eight state-owned wine factories in the country. The oldest of them, the Ashgabat wine factory, was founded in 1922. The news article reported that the Ashgabat wine factory presented the first-ever locally-made dry red wine at the Yalta Competition. However, the locally-made dry wine is not yet available on the local market.

15. (U) According to the Food Industry Association, Turkmenistan has 28,000 hectares of vineyards. Farmers grow grapes on state-owned vineyards on a contract basis. They sell grapes to the state-owned wine factories at a government-fixed price of 1,000,000 manat per ton (approximately USD 70).

16. (SBU) An Embassy contact familiar with the local wine industry said that Turkmen wine is primarily exported to Russia. Russian companies buy it because it is cheap. In general, the quality of Turkmen wine is not as good as the Turkmen news agency claimed in its report because of outdated technology and old equipment at Turkmen wineries. According to our contact, the wines that were exhibited at the Yalta Competition were produced under special conditions and in limited amounts. They are not available for sale to the public.

17. (SBU) COMMENT: Turkmen wine is not popular among locals because of its extreme sweetness. At a recent agricultural exhibition, a display of Turkmen wines and cognac included a couple bottles of the award-winning dry red wine "Oguzkent." When one of the exhibitors attempted to open the bottle in order to offer samples,

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half the cork crumbled, ending the attempt. Still, if Turkmen winemakers would focus on producing a palatable table wine, they could find considerable demand in the currently untapped local market. END COMMENT.

MILES